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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to put a face on the nation of India and give a reality to the culture that will enhance the study of the Indian subcontinent and its people. The resource guide provides background information for cultural study of the Indian region, but is not intended to be a concise study of the subcontinent. Sections of the paper include: (1) "History"; (2) "Geography"; (3) "Belief Systems"; (4) "Aesthetics"; (5) "Diversity"; and (6) "Indians on India." (EH)

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The Face of India: A Resource on the Humanity of India through the Ages.

Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminars Abroad 1997 (India)

by

Rosalie Gendimenico

Mary Pankow

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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE -
INDIA AS IT EMERGES INTO THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY
JULY 8 - AUGUST 15, 1997

THE FACE OF INDIA
A RESOURCE ON THE HUMANITY OF INDIA THROUGH THE AGES

MARY PANKOW
DEMASI MIDDLE SCHOOL
MARLTON, NEW JERSEY
USA

INTRODUCTION

To sum up the essence of the Indian culture within the content of this booklet would presume the Indian culture is easily explained and defined. Contrary to this, the Indian culture is a complex puzzle of people, traditions, belief systems and values. It is my intention to attempt to put a face on the nation and give a reality to the culture that will enhance the study of the Indian subcontinent and its people.

HISTORY

While this resource guide is intended to provide background information for cultural study of the Indian region, it is not intended to be a concise study of the history of the subcontinent. The information provided in this section is intended to provide information, that will give a better understanding of the evolution of a people rather than a historically detailed account of events.

ANCIENT INDIA

10000 YEARS AGO

Hunters and gathers roamed the region creating family groups and tribes that survive even until today in some regions of the subcontinent. It is hypothesized a change in environmental conditions created the need for domestication and the emergence of an agricultural civilization approximately 6000 years ago. In time a food surplus was created leading to a well organized civilization. This has been identified as the Indus Valley or Harappan civilization.

5000 YEARS AGO

Due to archaeological excavations, a network of more than 400 cities have been discovered to date. Harappa has emerged as an excellent example of the Indus Valley civilization. The study of Harappa, located in the northern region of Pakistan, has given us a unique perspective into the well-developed life style of this period.

Similarities found throughout the network seem to indicate evidence of authority or uniform control throughout the region. This claim is supported by uniformity in construction and brick, a system of weights and measures, and city designs utilizing the use of grids with buildings laid out in blocks, main roads and service lanes, well constructed homes with bathrooms and kitchens and drains connecting to a main sewer system, and an excellent water supply. A well-developed irrigation system linked rivers to fields. while granaries stored food for future use. The cities located along coastlines had well developed ports indicating the value of manufacturing and trade within the region. The people worked as stonecutters, metal workers, weavers, potters, jewellers, toymakers, and farmers.

The advanced level of the civilization is further supported by the unique written language or script which has yet to be deciphered. The language consists of symbols rather than letters, rather like pictographs. To date 350 - 400 different pictographs have been discovered. Family seals or stamps have been uncovered further indicating a desire to identify items, possibly for trade. There is further hypothesis considering the connection of the symbols to the belief system of the Harappans. Some seals have been found with holes suggesting the Harrapans wore the seals as a religious symbol or to guard against ill luck. Along with these seals, remnants of personal items have been found in

various locations. Many specimens of clothing, jewelry for both men and women, cosmetics, tools and implements such as knives, axes, arrow-heads, fish hooks, and razors have been found.

The people made toys for their children and enjoyed dancing, singing, and games of dice.

Many statues have been uncovered bearing similarities to Shiva and Pashupati, gods later found in Hinduism. There is also strong evidence to support animal worship, the worship of certain trees, and the belief in an after life.

Despite the advanced development of this region, in time, the Indus Valley civilization declined. No definitive reason for its demise has been determined, however there are some hypothesis that seem to persist among the explanations.

Through archaeological excavation, it has been determined, no large scale destruction due to invasion or war occurred. There seems to have been a gradual series of migrations, building and rebuilding of the region. A decline in the quality of construction and materials is evidence as various layers have been peeled away. The theory that persists indicates the possibility of flood or fire, or some geographical or climatic event causing the river to change its course. In time peoples of other areas, possible Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe migrated into the area, controlling the region. A further explanation suggests the domestication of animals necessitated the cutting or burning of forestlands to create the space needed for grazing. This in turn eliminated wild animals that may also have provided a food source to the region.

As the Indus Valley civilization declined the Aryan civilization emerged.

1500 B.C.

The Aryan people are believed to have migrated from the Middle Eastern and Central Asian regions and are considered to be predessors to the Indian people of today. They settled predominantly in the Gangetic Plain region, developing small communities that eventually evolved into villages, towns, and cities. Along with the geographic evolution, language, literature, and social patterns too were formed.

As they came into the region, they came into conflict with the local people and exercised control over them. Many of the traditions and customs they brought with them seem to lay the ground work for the belief systems that survive in India today. An agricultural and herding people, they depended greatly on cows and oxen, even going as far as to fight wars over the cows. They seem to be their most important form of wealth and generally established the value of an article in terms of cows. This seems to lay the

ground work for the continued reverence placed on the cow, by Hindus, in India today. Aryans brought with them the Rig Veda, the oldest book in India, which lays down the foundation of their society. They believed in the worship of nature, but also in one Supreme Power.

In time the Aryan society developed a grouping of its people by occupation, called the Four Varnas. They were:

Brahmans - learned men who performed various sacrifices

Kshatriyas - the warrior class

Vaishyas - agriculturalists, artisans, and merchants

Shudras - menial workers; they served the other three groups

The Brahmans seemed to establish religious practices within the Aryan civilization. Many of the customs and traditions established, in this period, formed the basis for the early Indian culture.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD

A.D.800 - 1700's

The Middle Period is a period of struggle for leadership in India. We find the establishment of kingdoms and independent states throughout all the regions of the subcontinent. There is no central authority and as a result, there are repeated struggles for supremacy. Social conditions generally deteriorate and the rules of castes are established, as the Varnas under the Aryans, are strengthened and observed rigidly. The Brahmans reach a higher level of supremacy and subcastes are formed. The role of women and their position deteriorates, while education in general, at lower levels, declines. Despite these difficulties, art, literature, and architecture thrive and are given great support. Education, at the university level is respected both nationally and internationally. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism emerge as the three major religions.

As India encourages contact through international trade, it also comes under attack by the Turks and Mongols. Arab civilization influences Indian thought, art, and architecture through the introduction of Islam.

The influences of all these cultures through the ancient and middle periods laid the foundation for the tolerant and composite culture that emerges as an Indian people.

THE MODERN PERIOD

1600'S - 1800'S

By the 1600's powerful nobles had created independent states throughout India. They were constantly at odds with each other and with no unifying force or authority to hold the country together, India lay vulnerable to the same colonization that was happening elsewhere in the world. The Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English had already established trade links in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but were now seeking stronger ties. The Portuguese and Dutch soon left for other territories, leaving the more powerful French and British to out maneuver each other for dominance. Political discord provided the opportunity for the Europeans to play one kingdom against the other while, at the same time, assisting them in their struggles in exchange for territory and trade rights.

Capitalizing on weaknesses in the infrastructure and a strong desire to establish trade, the English East India Company, later called the East India Company, gradually gained dominance in the region over the French. They were financially and commercially stronger than the French in part because they were a private enterprise that was given full support by the British government. The French, on the other hand, were a government concerned with establishing trade yet failing to give the support needed when conflict arose. Over a one hundred fifty year period, the British gradually established trade centers, while gaining control over the whole country. The British government began to exercise control over the East India Company ultimately giving it the control of the country.

Under British rule India's economy gradually declined. Land ownership was created for the first time. Revenues were collected on lands. Land was divided and subdivided into small units, with no improvements in agricultural production. Indebtedness increased among the peasants, resulting in removal of the land from the people. The self-sufficient village economy suffered as a result. A landlessness of some people is created. Nomadic lands were converted to canal-irrigated regions, removing nomadic populations and forcing them to migrate to mountain areas, further impacting on these lands. Forests were cut for the construction of the British railway, for tea and coffee plantations, and for the construction of resorts near the Himalayas. Animals were hunted for sport. The government paid greater attention to the production of cash crops like cotton, tea, indigo, jute, and opium than food production. Indian rulers realized large profits from the sale of manufactured goods and taxes on trade. Indian crafts and

industries declined as the desire for imported goods increased. Western ways were increasingly being accepted into the Indian culture.

Despite the abuses inflicted on the Indian people, some positive impacts were also felt by the subcontinent. English language was brought to India as the language of the British, but was also used in higher educational institutions. The number of schools and colleges increased, as did new developments in literature. It now bore the impact of western ideas. Ultimately, the English language had a unifying effect as it gradually became a national language. In a country of over 4000 dialects, historically, this had a great impact on the region. Railways, telegraph, and a postal system further brought outlying regions together. Work proceded toward the removal of untouchability and the elevation of the status of women. Child marriage was prohibited by law, female education was encouraged, and women became involved in nationalist movements.

INDEPENDENCE

During the mid 1800's the Indian National Congress emerged from a grass roots nationalist movement and consciousness. Their thinking was later influenced, additionally, by the revolutionary movements of Europe. The people became united in their cause. British rule had always been a foreign rule that operated at the expense of India for the gain of the British.

As stated previously, under British rule the economic and social wealth of India declined. The government was depleting India and its people on all sides. The attitude of the government was unsympathetic and discriminatory toward the Indian people. Millions were starving, due to famines, with no relief offered, education was inconsequential because most of the better jobs went to the English, and inequities in the laws gave favor to the British while humiliating the Indians.

As a result of the nationalist movement, the Indian National Congress demanded more elected representatives, and more services for Indians. The British gave into concessions for a time, then felt the demands were too excessive and deemed to keep everything status quo.

Although many individuals played important roles in the nationalist movement, Mohan Dass Gandhi became the first true leader of the Indian people. Through his ideas of truth, civil disobedience, and non-violence, and the support of the Indian people, he eventually convinced the British government that self-rule was the best rule. Additionally, Great Britain had expended a tremendous amount of energy fighting World War II. Her military power was exhausted and her economy was weakened as she attempted to rebuild at home. The British new it would be impossible to keep India in subjugation. Work progressed to create a peaceful transition of power. Despite the desire to create a unified India, difficulties arose between the Hindu and Muslim populations. It was ultimately decided to create a Hindu dominated area which would remain as India and a Muslim dominated area known as Pakistan and East Pakistan. On August 15,1947 independence was declared.

GEOGRAPHY

India is the seventh largest country in the world, half the size of the United States, wider than it is longer. It is bordered on the north by the Himalyan Mountain range. The Himalayas are actual made up of four separate, parallel rows of mountains 2400 kilometers long. The mountains have played an important role in India's life. They have not allowed penetration from winds, people, or influence. They are a natural barrier for defense, climate, and resources, but also allow for the unity of the people. The mountains are followed by the Ganges river, 2300 kilometers long, the life blood of the soul of India. The Ganges sits in the plain area that follows the mountains. Whatever the plain is, it is because of the mountains. They are intensively used for agriculture and population. Tribal populations dating back thousands of years still survive in this region. Following the plain region, more centrally located is the plateau. To the east and west of the plateau are the Eastern and Western Ghats. The Ghats are more hills than mountains.

The land gives to the country:

The plateau gives the mineral wealth.
The mountains give the climate and the forest.
The plains give agriculture.

The very size of India seems to absorb the shocks it has endured:

earthquakes
famine
political unrest

The most dynamic affect on the land comes from the monsoon. The monsoon ties the people to the land. Harvest, agriculture and festivals revolve around it as it brings the needed rains to quench the thirst of the land.

The monsoons are caused when the land heats as the summer nears. Over the desert the hot air creates an area of low pressure. The sea is colder than the air, creating an area of high pressure. The winds over the ocean are pulled onto the land, bringing the moisture from the ocean with them. There is a west to east and south to north monsoon pattern. As winter nears the wind reverse.

HINDUISM

There is much information readily available on the specific rules and structure of the various belief systems in India. I do not wish to go into those details that would make this a study of religions or beliefs, instead my aim is to make a connection to the essence of these systems and their relevance in the Indian culture.

There is a long history connecting India to a strong belief system. If we go back to the Aryans, we see the beginnings of what was to become Hinduism. The beginnings of the caste system are rooted in the class distinctions related to jobs and position in society. Despite the fact the caste system has been outlawed for decades, we find there is still a strong connection tied to the distinctions made in India today. Many jobs are still only associated with untouchables and many names identify very quickly which caste you are historically associated with. The belief in reincarnation further supports the continuation of the caste as it justifies the position you hold in life. It creates a sense of calm and acceptance, as the belief in the reward of the next life prevails. The regarded position the cow holds among Hindus can easily be connected to the high regard the Aryans held for cows. Hindus believe cows are to be respected, but are not necessarily sacred, as is commonly believed. This distinction is given to the cow because they give to man what only a mother can give to a child. The cow gives the sacred gift of food, milk, which is essential to the survival of the child and life.

Religious practices were established early on by the Brahmans, and this holds true today. The Brahmans are the holiest caste, usually associated with the religious population. Hindus go as far as to compare the caste to the human body by explaining the Brahmans are the head, standing for knowledge, the Kshatriyas are the arms, standing for warriors and fighters, the Vaishyas are the body, standing for a need to be fed and to be used for work, the Sudras are related to the lower body, legs, feet, and lower, because they will serve all the others.

Hinduism in many ways is a celebration of self and mankind. The philosophy behind Hinduism essentially is to appreciate the oneness. The early teachings that prevail suggest: "You are a manifestation of myself. I should not do anything to you because I should harm myself." "Whatever comes out will come back as the wave of an ocean. The wave is not separate, it is the ocean. We are all part. We do not have to look for the divinity to attain something. Discover the divinity in you. You just are - Learn to

recognize you are. Be part of the celebration." The teachings go on further to recognize everything has divinity. It is therefore natural to worship a tree or animal because it is part of the divinity you are. Restating, recognize the divinity and unity - the oneness of all.

What we find throughout the Hindu philosophy and India, as well, is an indomitable tolerance for difference. Philosophically, the people believe opposites must exist. Anything and everything is possible. There is no one way - there are many ways. "I cannot say your way is not so." I have been told Indians believe the answer to every question is: yes, no, maybe.

Hindus believe in harmony. This begins to further explain the belief in the divinity of plants and animals. The worship of nature is an expression of love. Early people gave the things in nature their names. The artist or sculpture gave it a form, further giving it an identity. The dancer described it through physical expression. The poet speaks of it. Each of these expressions gives it a life. Man has a poetic connection to nature. The river, for example is essential to life. It then becomes a means of expressing emotions. You treat it with respect.

All aspects of Indian culture point to her belief systems. Even the stories in literature are rooted in the ancient stories of the gods. Hinduism believes in a Trinity much like Christianity:

Brahma - the creator
Vishnu - the preserver
Shiva - the destroyer - defined more clearly as a dismantler, or dissolver of problems rather than destructive in nature.

Hindus believe Vishnu has come to the earth in ten incarnations with one more to come. The stories associated with Vishnu, and his incarnations, along with stories of the other gods, become the basis of much of the literature of India. I believe this can be compared with stories of the saints and miracles associated with Christian religions of the west.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism has its beginnings in a Hindu prince named Siddhartha Gautama. Before his birth, his mother had been told by a seer that if the child ever saw an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a ascetic in the same day, he would be a chosen one. His family did not want this to happen so kept him sheltered within the palace wall most of his life. He married and had a child, but still had not left the palace. One day he decided to venture out to see what was beyond the walls. As he roamed among the people he saw a sick man, a dead man, an old man, and an ascetic. The thoughts of these sights played heavy on his mind and found he could no longer stay within the palace but needed to venture out to find answers to the questions that were formed within his mind. This very act has made him highly respected because he renounced everything he had for the sake of others. Indians believe the one who gives up everything is the king without an army. He searched and questioned trying to find the answer to why man suffers. In time he decided to meditate and seek his answers under a Bo tree in Bodh Gaya, Behair. While meditating he became enlightened and recieved the answer he was seeking, that man suffers in life because of desires, and to relieve himself of his suffering, he must relieve himself of his desires. He created an eight-fold path to end man's suffering and went throughout India preaching his message. He continued to believe in reincarnation as part of the journey to Nirvana while sharing his ideas on ridding man of desires and living a life full of right actions, thinking, effort, living, and meditation. He further emphasized a simple life with a gentleness of spirit, and a kindness toward animals.

Buddhism, in India, is tied to Hinduism, The fact that Buddha started his life as a Hindu, historically, connects the two religions. Additionally, Hindus believe Buddha to be an incarnation of Vishnu making the connection even stronger. One major difference between the two religions is the lack of a caste system in Buddhism. This has further connected the two religions since many Hindus have converted to Buddhism.

JAINISM

Jainism is a religion that bears a resemblance to Hinduism in part because Hindus have assimilated many of the Jain ideals into their religion. Jains are vegetarians who have the utmost respect for all living things to the extent they will not eat root vegetables because bugs and earthworms are killed in the harvest. They live according to the strictest code of non-violence. They avoid harsh words and insults because they are a form of verbal violence and do not work in agriculture or leatherwork because of the harm these profession inflict on lower creatures.

Jains contribute to the community by working as traders, merchants, or moneylenders. They also construct facilities for the care of animals.

There are approximately three and a half million Jains in India today.

SIKHISM

Sikhism is a unique religion unto itself, not a blending or assimilation of others. The message of Sikhism is simply a message of love, faith, and equality. It rejects the separation of people by caste or religion and provides a way for people to break down those barriers. Sikhs are tied spiritually to this world as opposed to following a path of salvation, but believe in God. They do not smoke or drink and although there is no rule against it, many refrain from eating beef or the meat of other animals that are killed with a single blow. Orthodox Sikhs do not have a last name, men use the name Singh and women use the name Kaur. The Sikhs identify themselves by five K's:

kesa - hair that is uncut
kangha - a comb, to keep their hair in order
kara - a steel bracelet to symbolize their identity
kachh - short breeches
kirpan - a sword (symbolically not necessary literally) - not to initiate violence but to defend. A Sikh will not turn the other cheek.

All men and women have an equal status in the temple. All decisions are made by all members of the temple in an open meeting. Leadership is voted on and everyone eats together in a community kitchen. On worship days, all who come to the temple will be fed, whether you are a member or not.

ISLAM

The largest population of Muslims in the world resides in Indian, while also being the largest minority religion in the country. The history of Muslims in India varies according to your region. In the north, Muslims came as invaders and conquerors, with a long history of conflict, while in the south, they came as traders with peaceful intentions.

Philosophically, Muslims believe in a sense of brotherhood. There is no discrimination. The Muslim is obligated to help man without caring who he is or what his beliefs are. The followers of Islam are obliged to perform ritual prayer five times a day (namaz), observe the ritual fast during Ramadan, perform zakat (contribute a portion of their income to the mosque), and at least once in their life observe a pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims do not eat pork and amphibians. The meat they eat must be ritually slaughtered.

The regions of India that have come under Islamic influence have impacted on foods, architecture, music, dance, social life, and customs. Muslim women wear the purdah which coincides with the Hindu concept of modesty in women.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity has a deep rooted beginning in India that dates back to St. Thomas the apostle. St. Thomas, Doubting Thomas, as he is referred to in Christian literature, came to Kerala, India in 52 A.D. He converted Hindus, ordained priests, and eventually was martyred.

Despite Christian teachings, the new converts continued to follow Hindu practices such as recognizing the caste system, maintaining Hindu dress, customs, and language.

Many early explorers came to India as missionaries eager to convert Indians to Christian ways. They opened hospitals, home for lepers, schools and colleges, attracting Indian interest in Christianity. While the overall Christian population is approximately 2.5 %, the majority of this population is located in the state of Kerala. Many believe this accounts for the high literacy rate (97%) in this region. There has been a long history of and respect for education. Kerala is considered to have one of the highest standards of living in all of India. Today, Christians in Kerala, continue to enjoy a position relative to the higher castes, marrying within their own community.

ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrianism is the religion associated with the Parsis. It originally came from Persia and Parsi is derived from the word Persia.

The Parsis believes in the ethical treatment of other human beings and believe in the veneration of all elements. Therefore Parsis do not bury or cremate their dead as it would contaminate the elements of the earth. Instead burial occurs in the Temple of Silence where bodies are laid on exposed platforms out of view of the public. Vultures scavenge the bodies, then bones are lowered into pits where they are covered in lime and minerals that will allow them to slowly dissolve without desecrating the earth.

The god of Parsis is Ahura Mazda and is considered the most luminous of bodies. The symbol for Ahura Mazda is fire because it burns bright and pure. The sacred fire was brought from Persia in 1741 and has been burning in the Fire Temple since that time.

The membership in the religion is dwindling in part because you may not become a Parsi unless you are the child of two Parsis and you choose to be initiated in the religion. Anyone marrying outside the faith may not remain a member of the religion. Additionally, restrictions were placed on the religion after independence. Unless you are a Parsi, you may not enter the temple, and, a Parsis may not actively seek converts. There are approximately 85,000 members in India today. They are predominantly in the upper end of business with two major Indian companies Tata and Godrej being owned and operated by Parsi followers.

AESTHETICS

The art of India is anonymous. In 5000 years of art very few names have emerged or survived. No diaries, records, or documentation have been found. It has been suggested the art was a collective work or, perhaps, artists were illiterate. However, the population, as a whole, was not illiterate. In a sixth century text it is said, "Art of India is anonymous because the anonymity is in accordance with the truth." "The painter does not create the painting, he only holds the brush." Going back to the early section on Hinduism, I spoke of the divinity in people. This further illustrates why signed works of art are rare. Since the belief is everyone is part of the same divinity, the work is shared, a conglomerate effort. So, no signature is necessary.

Early art forms were tied to nature and the elements and therefore to religious belief systems. The Buddhist religion can be traced by a methodical study of artistic expression. This can be evidenced in carvings and paintings done in over 1200 caves, throughout India, dating back to the 6th century A.D. And, as stated above, rarely, have signatures. This would also follow the belief the art is for the glory or exaltation of the god not the person creating it.

Hindu temples, traditionally, became the seat of learning for various forms of worship including dance, painting, sculpture, music, and crafts. As a result, you will find many paintings and sculptures depicting Hindu gods or religious stories. The various forms of traditional Indian dance tell the stories of the gods and how they came to be. Hand and body movements symbolize gods or their actions and, when combined with music, tell the story.

The traditional musical form in India is called "Raga". It is a scientific form of music that establishes its unique sound in the continuity of note. There is no harmony, musical phrasing, or words. When drums are used in traditional music, the beat is established by the syllables in the song rather than a western style of beat done to a set rhythm.

Most forms of architecture, aside from British, blend a variety of motifs from Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic religions. Within the Islamic religion, creative expressions may not include living things, but may make use of Muslim writings and geometric shape. When these forms are combined with designs from Hinduism and Buddhism the result can be quite breathtaking as is exhibited in the Taj Mahal.

Regardless of the form of artistic expression the artist strives for "Rasa". Rasa conveys the essence of the expression. It helps the viewer make an emotional

connection to the piece, to suspend belief. Indians believe this is a connection to supremeness. You are not you, you are in the state when you cannot express your thoughts or feelings. Indians believe this state strengthens your resources to endure. It also explains an aesthetic sensibility the Indian people seem to exhibit throughout their culture.

DIVERSITY

Within its homogeneous society there is a diversity that exists throughout Indian culture. This diversity celebrates its triumphs while witnessing its weaknesses.

The union of a diverse culture brought about the independence the India people so richly deserved. The coexistence of people with varying dietary, social, and religious practices is a triumph of a peoples tolerance over the uniqueness of difference. However, despite these celebrations of the human spirit, diverse beliefs, traditions, and philosophies have resulted in India's struggle with weaknesses, problems, and advancements. Some areas of concern focus on education, women's issues, children's issues, and economics.

The caste system has survived in India along with the evolution of authority. God did not create inequality, man created it then put it in the name of God. If you look at the caste system as an inequitable division of people and expect it to explain India's problems, you will not find the answers you seek. It is the relationship of man to woman, man to child, and man to institution where many of India's problems lay.

WOMAN'S ISSUES

Man's tryanny against man has been great, man's tyranny against women has been subtle. In India, a woman's service, at the economic level is taken for granted. She is part of the labor force, yet not part of it. The injustices that have prevailed against women start at a young age and have, only recently, come under attack.

Previously, young girls could only go to high school if they paid tuition. In certain parts of India, girls are now guaranteed a free education through secondary school. Public campaigns have begun to encourage girls to continue their education. Originally, many young women may have been able to aquire a college level education, but, they would not have been able to take the exams to have the degree conferred. In time it became acceptable for girls to go into the educational field because it complimented family life.

With a national average of 50% literacy, the women's literacy average is 20%.

Today, the women of India have begun to group together to build a strong movement for change and equitable treatment. In 1993, a bill was passed giving women a 33% representation in local authorities. Domestic violence is a problem across castes and gender, but, if a woman can prove there has been abusive treatment in the first seven years of their marriage charges can be lodged against her husband. Additionally, if a married woman dies of unnatural causes, her family may also charge a complaint. Women have not usually made such charges in the past because of a lack of support. Divorce has generally not been a choice for Indian women, because of the stigma attached to it. It also places the Indian women in a difficult position, since no traditions are in place to allow for her independence or care. Women are generally been dependent on their husbands. Usually, they do not receive parental support in this matter, so if a separation ocurrs they would have to continue to live in the same household and would continue to be abused. Today, thoughts are changing and women are being taught to be independent before marriage.

Sexual bias is still an issue particularly in the corporate world. The first question women are asked when they are seeking employment is whether they are married or have children. You generally will not find women making complaints about bosses or conditions in the workplace.

Rape laws have changed in the last ten years to favor the woman. Previous to 1986, a woman had to prove she was raped. In 1986 the law was changed to put the burden of proof of innocence on the man. According to the law, rape is criminal, but, according to social perspective, it is not. Incest has also been an issue that is being reported more and becoming more wide known. More and more women are being informed of their rights. While this is a step

forward, the police, judiciary, or other legal agencies do not provide the appropriate support or enforcement needed to safeguard women's rights.

Women are also working to procure birth control rights. They are striving for the right to use birth control when their husbands refuse to condoms. As of the present, they do not have the right to birth control.

Rural women tend to have more support than urban women because they are part of an extended community. When they take a stand, they are supportive of each other.

The women's movement began as a grass roots effort then blossomed. They worked to build pressure in the capital because that is where the seat of government is. In Jaipur, special police stations have been identified for women. There they will have the necessary support when a crime is reported.

The village women may have the support within their village to push the issues, but the educated city women can be the voice to spread the word and contact the necessary agencies to get the changes implemented.

In general many of the women's issues are also survival issues. A lot of men are supportive of the cause. Many people have been mobilized toward this movement, but it is necessary to have media support. In some areas television adds are broadcast to raise gender equity issues. The state has come forward with funding for many of these programs.

EDUCATION

When addressing education, we need to take a look at the broader picture of cultural education rather than just specifically at the academic sphere. Many issues are presently coming to the fore front and are receiving much needed attention.

Within the academic sphere, the main issues rest with gender equity, and equitable education. The urban and rural educations vary greatly. The rural education will occur within the village surrounding. The students will unlikely attend a university unless some unique opportunity presents itself for college attendance. The urban setting provides a number of different educational opportunities for the Indian student. Public schools funded by the government and private schools funding by tuition are available. Public schools have come under attach for failing to provide a quality education. Absenteeism among teacher has been high, due to a lack of accountability. The teacher training has had minimal emphasis, in the past. This is an area that is presently be strengthen. Teacher absenteeism is being addresses and remedied. There is a drive to improve the quality of public school education. As a result of past performance by public school, parents, who are able, send their children to private schools. Despite high enrollments, private schools have provided a more consistent and concise educational program and a greater opportunity for college or university attendance. The students generally wear uniforms and attend school in split sessions. Lower elementary students attend in the mornings with upper elementary and secondary students attending later in the day. The children attend school five and a half days a week with a shorter session on Saturday. Until recently, tuition was required at the secondary level for all students in public schools. As a result lesser numbers of girls attend high school, continuing to add to the literacy problem. A law has been passed to eliminate this tuition for girls encouraging them to stay in school and complete their education. Despite this, more work needs to be done to reinforce the value of girls in society. More girls die between two months and one year of age due to malnutrition.

The teachers are highly dedicated and anxious to bring their students into the twenty first century, but are hampered by limited resources and overcrowded conditions with class sizes averaging forty students or higher. The students, in the private schools, are generally from higher social positions and aspire to enter fields related to business, economics, and science.

A larger issue regarding children is the issue of child labor. This is an extremely controversial issue since many families truly rely on the income of all members to survive. If laws are created to ban child labor, how will the government assure the children will get an education if they

cannot pay the tuition? How will the families be subsidized to compensate for the lack of income? How will the children be provided with appropriate food rations so they will not suffer from hunger? These are all issue that have to be resolved as human rights issues are explored.

A more recent area requiring an educated public is the one related to the environment. Environmental problems date back to the British. Earlier, I mentioned deforestation by the British for construction of railroads, homes, and resorts. That deforestation still impacts the people and remains a present day issue. When the environment of India is changed, polluted, or destroyed, the impact on the Indian people is felt far and wide. A large percentage of Indian population relies on the land for survival and work. Deforestation will cause the elimination of a work place and home and the demise of animal life in that region. Unless you are able to relocate in a similar area or reeducate, you will only increase the level of poverty within the country as more people become displaced.

In general the India people need to be mobilized toward literacy. Approximately one third of the population is illiterate.

ECONOMICS

There are two areas to be addressed in relation to economics; private industry and government issues.

In relation to the government the most crucial issue is government spending and corruption. Unfortunately, corruption exists at all levels and makes it difficult to allocate appropriate funds where they are needed. Fifty percent of the population lives below poverty level. Yet the population continues to rise at two percent per year. Population growth continues, despite government suggestions of two children per family. There is still a social and cultural pressure to continue to have children until you have a son.

Approximately 12 million people are paying the taxes for a population of 950 million. Health and education continue to be major issues. It would take 50% of the annual budget to have an impact on these areas, yet only 2% is spent.

Technology, in agriculture, has been utilized to its best advantage. More land is needed for crops so, forest lands are being destroyed.

The government needs to mobilze to develop the human capabilities within the country. Programs need to be created to improve sanitation, clean water supplies, and provide adequate food for all the people.

India has made positive changes in recent years to encourage trade and development within the private sector. In the last four to five years India has lifted many of its previous restrictions on business ventures. License requirements have been suspended except with regards to the import of consumer goods. This has meant a change for the consumer since competition has been created. It has also allowed for the development of international industries within India's borders. As a result, many western industries are trying to make inroads in India. Some recent examples are:

Kellogg's has introduced its cereal line into India. Its early entry has not been as successful as had been anticipated. This is due to the expense of the product and, culturally, cereal is not in line with typical Indian breakfast food.

Baskin Robbins introduced it's ice cream into the Indian market. It too met with minimal success. This is also in part due to the expense of the product. Indians have been very happy with Indian ice cream and saw no particular reason to switch to a more expensive product. Baskin Robbins has since lowered its price and is meeting with some success.

Ford has introduced one of it's 1997 models into the Indian market at a competitive price, yet the 1950 Ambassador continues to sell better. As seems to be the pattern set by Kellogg's and Baskin Robbins, the Indian

people continue to stick with what they know and what is reliable. The Ambassador automobile is reliable, but if it should break down, can be repaired, easily, at almost any street corner service station. The Ford has not established reliability, nor can repairs be done as conveniently as with the Ambassador.

While India can expect the influx of international business enterprises to continue and become a large part of the Indian economic system, the domestic market has held up well. The belief is the international market will help strengthen the economy by not only bring more consumer goods into the region, but by also providing job opportunities and revenue.

INDIANS ON INDIA

As I traveled throughout India and engaged in conversation, I found many interesting insights into India's culture and its people through what was said by people going on about their day to day lives. I would simply like to state these comments here and hope they provide you with a glimpse at India's soul.

" A house with a guest is a house with love."

" Development should not proceed at the cost of the culture."

" A work of art has a body and a soul, an external and internal, an outside and inside."

" When you give, give something you can give for the whole of your life." (one hour of service, etc.)

" Great men do a lot of good, but also do unintended harm."

" The time of great thinkers, philosophers, etc. is past. This is the time for ordinary man. Ordinary men do extraordinary things."

" When thoughts change, action changes."

" A man or woman that does not produce does not have the right to consume." Gandhi

" I want all the windows of my house to be free so all the winds may blow through, but I do not want any of those winds to blow me off my feet." Gandhi

" Self respect is the best remedy for the uplifting of the untouchables."

" The goal of life is to be happy. Why initiate a lifestyle that does not make you happy?" Gandhi

" The ventilation of different points of view is part of the Indian idea of democracy."

" Thinking of ancient civilization has an inscrutability about it. The older you get, the more you know, and, the more you see it is better to be inscrutable."

" We have the means, we have not defined the ends."

Fulbright Scholar Experiences the Face of India

by Mary Pankow, Evesham EA

This past summer, 16 educators from across the United States traveled to India representing the U.S. Department of Education as participants in the Fulbright-Hayes Summer Seminar Abroad Program.

As one of the recipients of this fellowship, I spent five weeks traveling throughout India studying her history, government, belief systems, and culture.

This experience is a nonstop adventure into a culture we, as Americans, know very little about. We can read books and eat in Indian restaurants, but the face of India can only be seen by experiencing India. Throughout my five weeks of travel, I was given the rare opportunity to visit Agra, Mumbai, Calcutta, Banaras, Jaipur, Madras and Delhi, and to see, first hand, the Taj Mahal, the Palace of the Winds, the Red Fort, the place where Gandhi was shot, and the Ganges.

The Fulbright program provided a lecture series consisting of meetings with professors, authors, and scholars who shared their expertise on topics related to the government, India's history, women's issues, literature, customs and traditions, the triumphs of the past and the challenges of the future.

Our endless experiences provided new encounters and excitement each day. In one week we visited Banaras, the Holiest city of the Hindus, Sarnath, the place where Buddha preached his first sermon, and we met privately with Mother Theresa. Just one of those encounters would have left a unique impact on me, but to have all three is overwhelming. To see hundreds of Hindus making their pilgrimages to the holy waters of the Ganges and see the ruins of where Buddha found tranquility and peace, causes you to step back and see the commitment the Indian people have to the essence of who they are. It is a commitment that doesn't question, but sets forth a continuous example to follow.

While this was intended to be an instructional experience providing opportunities for gathering resources and compiling research, we were also provided with the opportunities to meet with students and colleagues. The educators I met with welcome the opportunity to share ideas with American colleagues. They find themselves in overcrowded classroo 40 students or more, teach split sessions and a half days a week with limited reso and continue to inspire their students t excellence. Simple techniques such as th lization of cooperative learning, or carous are relatively impossible given the numb students per classroom, yet our colleagu ready for the challenge. The teachers ar dominantly female, therefore, continually ple with educational and women's issues, One of our colleagues discussed, with me she was considered a rebel because, althou her fifties, she was returning to college t tinue her education.

It has been a month since I have ret home and still I am trying to grasp the m tude of what I observed and learned. In m experiences, I have found my strongest im sions have always been made by the p India is no exception. I find myself left w compelling sense of resilience and str Regardless of their situation, despite the c cles their life may encounter, the Indian p have a strength, a patience, and a calm, g ness of spirit that can inspire us all.

If you are interested in more inform regarding the Fulbright-Hayes Su Seminar Program, or would be interest sharing ideas with our Indian colleagues, p contact me:

Mary Pankow
De Masi Middle School, Marlton
988-0777

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